

paper." It was with such dedication that the newspaper persevered to keep all the Armenians in California informed and connected.

Recognizing that there was an important role for Asbarez to play in the growing Armenian community in Southern California, Asbarez Publishing Company moved its operation to Los Angeles in the 1970's. In the last three decades, Asbarez has become a bilingual daily newspaper, becoming the voice of the Armenian-American community from libraries to newsrooms.

Today, what was once a small paper has grown to thousands of subscriptions, and is read in numerous countries reaching a larger, more diverse audience than ever before. It has maintained and reaffirmed its commitment to providing reliable news and information to the community for 95 years.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Asbarez's invaluable service to the constituents of the 29th Congressional District over the years. Asbarez has truly succeeded in becoming a trusted information and community source. I ask that all the members join me in congratulating Asbarez's 95 years of establishment and service to the community.

JAVITS-WAGNER-O'DAY NATIONAL DISABILITIES DAY

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues of the many barriers people with disabilities face. They confront barriers to employment, transportation and mobility issues, environmental obstacles, as well as fears, prejudices and misconceptions about their ability to offer valuable service to business, to our communities, and to our nation.

People with disabilities battle a 50 percent nationwide unemployment rate, and those with severe disabilities struggle with a debilitating 70 percent rate of unemployment. I regret that ten years after this Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is still necessary to affirm that people with disabilities can work and want to work. They can enrich the workplace with meaningful skills and talents. And they, like any other Americans, want to contribute their talents to our society.

The key to changing these shocking labor statistics is to encourage employers to focus on the abilities of an individual, rather than an individual's disabilities. Hiring a deserving, qualified individual with a disability is a win-win situation for business and the community. When a person with a disability is employed, the positive benefits reverberate in the community reducing welfare dependency and generating self-sufficiency, independence, stable families, and an increased tax base. Employing people with disabilities helps businesses as well. They have extremely high retention rates, higher than most employees, and there can be tax advantages for businesses that hire employees with disabilities.

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program is to be commended and should be supported for providing employment opportunities to Americans with disabilities. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the Fed-

eral Government to buy products and services from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. JWOD completes the cycle of support by enabling persons with disabilities to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence.

The program serves 40,000 people with disabilities nationwide. Last year, it generated approximately \$280 million in wages earned and nearly \$1.5 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, some 972 people with disabilities earned nearly \$3 million in wages last year as a result of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day program.

The Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI), a community rehabilitation facility in my district, has found particular success with JWOD contracts. Bobby Dodd Institute trainees operate the Veterans Administration Hospital switchboard, the U.S. Attorney Office mailroom, the Decatur Army Reserve Base janitorial service, and even have an expanded regional presence at the Veterans Administration Hospital switchboard in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

As a result of these JWOD contracts, the Bobby Dodd Institute has been able to provide employment opportunities to numerous individuals with disabilities and has helped them to become independent, self-sufficient citizens. I am pleased that these JWOD contracts have had such a positive impact and hope that this is only the beginning. With support from my esteemed colleagues, Javits-Wagner-O'Day contracts can increase, and our whole society will benefit.

This is a program that truly makes a difference in the nation, and in Georgia. I am proud to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF END RACIAL PROFILING ACT OF 2004

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the End Racial Profiling Act of 2000, along with additional bipartisan cosponsors. As a product of years of extensive consultation with both the law enforcement and civil rights communities, this legislation represents the most comprehensive federal commitment to healing the rift cause by racial profiling and restoring public confidence in the criminal justice system at-large. The introduction of this legislation is critical step in what should be a nationwide, bipartisan effort to end this divisive practice.

Before September 11, 2001, there was wide agreement among Americans, including President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft, that racial profiling is wrong and should end. Many in the law enforcement community acknowledged that singling out people for heightened scrutiny based on their race, ethnicity or national origin had eroded the trust in law enforcement necessary to appropriately serve and protect our communities. What was true before September 11th is even more true today: racial profiling is inappropriate and ineffective as a law enforcement tactic.

To that end, the Bush administration has promulgated a series of guidelines which are designed to end the practice of racial profiling

by federal law enforcement agencies. However, we must not mistake the issuance of federal guidelines as the final resolution of the racial profiling problem nationwide. The vast majority of racial profiling complaints arise from the routine activities of state and local law enforcement agencies. While these guidelines send a signal, they are not a replacement for the enactment of comprehensive federal anti-profiling legislation.

Racial profiling not only undermines our constitutional rights, it undermines the trust on which law enforcement depends to protect our communities. Since the first introduction of racial profiling legislation in the 105th Congress, the pervasive nature of the practice has gone from anecdote and theory to well documented fact. Data collected from New Jersey, Maryland, Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, New York and Massachusetts show beyond a shadow of a doubt that African-Americans and Latinos are being stopped for routine traffic violations far in excess of their share of the population or even the rate at which such populations are accused of criminal conduct. Moreover, a recent Justice Department report found that although African-Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be stopped and searched by law enforcement, they are much less likely to be found in possession of contraband.

This legislation is designed to eliminate racial profiling by changing the policies and procedures underlying the practice. First, the bill provides a prohibition on racial profiling, enforceable by injunctive relief. Second, the receipt of federal law enforcement and other monies that go to state and local governments is conditioned on their adoption of effective policies that prohibit racial profiling. Third, the Justice Department is authorized to provide grants for the development and implementation of best policing practices, such as early warning systems, technology integration, and other management protocols that discourage profiling. Finally, the Attorney General is required to provide periodic reports to assess the nature of any ongoing discriminatory profiling practices.

The vast majority of law enforcement officers discharge their duties professionally and without bias. The value of their service should not be tarnished by a minority of police officials who engage in discriminatory behavior. Evidence obtained from enforcement efforts over the past several years has made it clear that federal action is necessary to address this problem with finality.

Racial profiling is a divisive practice that strikes at the very foundation of our democracy. When law-abiding citizens are treated differently by those who enforce the law simply because of their race, ethnicity, religion or national origin, they are denied the basic respect and equal treatment that is the right of every American. Decades ago, with the passage of sweeping civil rights legislation this country made clear race should not affect the treatment of individual Americans under the law. The practice of using race as a criterion in law enforcement flies in the face of the progress we have made toward racial equality.

With the continuing cooperation of the Administration, we have the opportunity to move bipartisan legislation and end the practice of racial profiling. I hope that we do not miss an historic opportunity to heal the rift cause by racial profiling and restore community confidence in law enforcement.